

I. HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCE AREAS

A. INTRODUCTION

Arlington honors its heritage – preserving the tapestry of historic buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes that serve as visual reminders of the town’s three and one-half centuries of development. From Arlington’s pivotal role in the events that precipitated the Revolutionary War to the legacy of such generous benefactors as the Robbins family, Arlington has much to celebrate – and much to preserve.

This element of the master plan provides an overview of Arlington’s varied historic and cultural resource areas and presents a framework for their continued protection and preservation. Arlington’s *historic resources* are those physical remnants that provide a visible connection with the past. These include the town’s historic buildings, objects, structures, designed landscapes, and cemeteries. Often used interchangeably with “historic resources”, *cultural resources* are those tangible assets that provide evidence of past human activities, including both manmade and natural sites, structures, and objects that possess significance in history, architecture, archaeology, or human development.¹ Arlington’s cultural resources include the heritage landscape of the Mill Brook, which represents generational use for industrial purposes. In most instances, a community’s historic cultural resource areas do not include creative cultural activities that may be present in the modern context unless they represent historic use as creative sites. Together, Arlington’s collection of historic and cultural resources tell a unique story of the people who have called the town home for almost 400 years and the Native Americans who resided in the land known as Menotomy prior to European settlement. Today, these irreplaceable resources contribute to Arlington’s visual character and sense of place.

B. GOALS

- Maintain, protect, preserve, and promote historic and diverse cultural resources in all neighborhoods.
- Provide attractive, well-maintained spaces for residents to meet, play, and grow.
- Promote arts and cultural spaces for all ages.

C. KEY FINDINGS

- Arlington’s historic civic spaces are beloved community institutions that serve as both visual landmarks and cultural gathering spaces and preservation of these resources is a community priority. While the Town has been a good steward of its historic properties, it has not protected all of its historic properties through local historic district designation or placement

¹ National Park Service, *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/nps28/28intro.htm

of preservation restrictions. Furthermore, several sites and buildings remain in need of repair and long-term maintenance plans.

- Arlington’s preservation groups continue to strive to foster a sense of community stewardship for the town’s historic resources similar to what is in practice for Arlington’s open spaces and natural resources areas.
- Despite ongoing efforts to preserve the town’s historic and cultural resource areas, many of Arlington’s historic assets are in private ownership and remain unprotected and vulnerable to unsympathetic alterations and demolition.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

1. Historic & Cultural Resource Areas

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Arlington’s collection of historic buildings represent the architectural styles popular during the past 300 years, including the Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; the Second Empire, Gothic Revival, and Italianate styles fashionable in the mid-nineteenth century; the Romanesque, Queen Anne, and Shingle Styles of the late nineteenth century; and the Revival styles of the early- to mid-twentieth century. These styles are represented in both “high-style” architect-designed buildings and more modest “vernacular” versions constructed by local builders, and they are rendered on a variety of building forms, including residential, commercial, religious, institutional, industrial, and governmental buildings.²

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Arlington’s residential architecture is striking due to the diversity of its historic housing stock, both in terms of styles represented and building form and scale. In many instances, Arlington’s neighborhoods present an architectural history lesson as one travels down the tree-lined streets. Particularly in the town’s older neighborhoods, houses of different styles sit side by side displaying a variety of ornamental trim and embellishment. In some of Arlington’s newer neighborhoods, a single architectural style is represented displaying a striking visual consistency. This can be seen in the repetitive form of steep-gabled English Revival homes found in Arlington Heights and the consistent scale and massing of Arlington’s mid-century neighborhoods. Arlington homeowners take great pride in their historic homes, preserving and restoring the architectural details that make their homes special. Interspersed among Arlington’s single and multi-family homes, particularly along and near Massachusetts Avenue and other major

² The Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) has documented many historic resources on Massachusetts Historic Resource Inventory forms. Unless noted otherwise, these inventory forms are the main source of historic and architectural information in this plan. In some instances, historic names cited on inventory forms may conflict with commonly used names. For this plan, we have used historic names as identified on the town’s inventory forms. Resources with an inventory form are noted by an asterisk (*).

transportation routes, are early twentieth century brick apartment buildings elaborately detailed with Classical and Renaissance Revival style ornamentation.

CIVIC BUILDINGS

The Town of Arlington owns an impressive collection of architecturally and historically significant buildings, including its Town Hall, public library and school buildings, fire stations, cemetery chapel, and several historic houses. Most of Arlington's civic buildings were constructed in the early twentieth century as the town transitioned to a more densely settled suburb. While the Town continues to use most of its buildings for their original intended purpose, it has converted several to new uses while respecting the architectural integrity of each structure. Arlington values its municipal properties, which serve as both cultural landmarks and community gathering places, and has been a relatively good steward of these historic assets. The Town has undertaken interior and exterior restoration projects on many of its historic properties; however, several town-owned historic resources such as the Jefferson Cutter House and the Winfield-Robbins Memorial Garden remain in need of repair.

Civic Block. Located on Massachusetts Avenue in the heart of Arlington Center, the Civic Block contains three of Arlington's most iconic civic institutions – the Robbins Library, the Robbins Memorial Town Hall, and the Whittemore-Robbins House – all interconnected by the landscaped grounds and brick walkways of the Winfield-Robbins Memorial Garden. The Civic Block represents the generosity of the Robbins family, who donated funds for construction of these impressive landmarks. All buildings within the Civic Block are well-preserved and are designated within the Arlington Center National Register Historic District.

- **Robbins Library*** (1892), 700 Massachusetts Avenue. Designed by the architectural firm of Cabot, Everett, and Mead in the Italian Renaissance style, the impressive edifice of the Robbins Library was reputed to be modeled after the Cancelleria Palace in Rome. This grand building is constructed of sandstone ashlar with elaborate architectural embellishment, including three-story arched windows, a limestone and marble portico, and a grand central rotunda.³ The building's interior features an ornately detailed Reading Room. The building was modified with additions in 1930 and 1994. In 2013, the Town replaced the original slate roof on the 1930 addition.
- **Robbins Memorial Town Hall*** (1913), 730 Massachusetts Avenue. Designed in the Classical Revival style by architect R. Clipston Sturgis, the sandstone Robbins Memorial Town Hall complements the Robbins Library located directly to the east. The Town Hall's three-bay façade features a central pavilion with projecting arcaded entrance porch. Two projecting pavilions accented by rusticated limestone and ashlar panels flank the porch. Balustrades crown both the entrance porch and roof cornice, and an ornate cupola capped by a pineapple tops the gable roof. Arlington recently restored the building's auditorium and held a series of celebrations in 2013 to honor Town Hall's 100th anniversary. The Town received a Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) grant from the Massachusetts Historical

³ Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Form A – Area: Town Center Historic District*.

Commission (MHC) for its restoration efforts, requiring the Town to protect the building with a preservation restriction.

- **Whittemore-Robbins House*** (ca. 1795), at 670R Massachusetts Avenue. Located at the rear of the Civic Block is the Federal style Whittemore-Robbins House. This three-story wood frame mansion features front and rear porches and a hipped roof crowned with an ornate cupola. The building served as the Robbins family home until 1931, when the family donated the property to the Town. In 1890, the Town relocated the house, rotating and moving it back from Massachusetts Avenue to allow for the construction of the Robbins Library. From 1976 to 1993, the Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) worked to restore the building's public rooms for a museum. The building now serves as a museum and meeting and function facility. The AHC and the Arlington Youth Consultation Center also maintain offices in the building.

FIRE STATIONS

Arlington's two historic fire stations were designed by architect George Ernest Robinson in the Georgian Revival style. The red brick and stone **Central Fire Station*** (1926) at 1 Monument Park in Arlington Center was one of the first octagonal fire stations constructed in the United States. Its unique design allowed fire trucks to emerge simultaneously from six different directions.⁴ The building's tower, originally designed to hang fire hoses to dry, continues to serve as a visual landmark in Arlington Center.

For the **Highland Hose House*** (1928) at 1007 Massachusetts Avenue, Robinson designed features to imitate those found on several of Boston's most iconic eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings. The fire station's stepped gable ends and rounded windows are reminiscent of the Old State House, while its cupola and gilded grasshopper weathervane imitate Faneuil Hall. The building's interior is also architecturally and historically significant, with woodwork created by the Theodore Schwamb Company and a Cyrus E. Dallin bronze relief of one of Arlington's former fire chiefs in the lobby. The hose house was the Schwamb Company's first commission after it converted its milling and cabinetry operation from piano case manufacturing to architectural woodworking. In 2012, the Town completed a LEED certified renovation of the building, including exterior repairs and interior renovations.⁵

MUNICIPAL BUILDING REUSE

While most of Arlington's governmental buildings continue to serve their original civic capacity, the Town has converted several of its historic buildings to new uses, including two former schools, a former library, and two houses. The Town leases these buildings to private groups.

The former **Central School*** (1894), Arlington's first high school, now serves as the Arlington Multi-Purpose Senior Center and is leased to variety of tenants. Designed by Hartwell and

⁴ Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Corridor Management Plan: Battle Road Scenic Byways: Road to Revolution*, 57.

⁵ Town of Arlington, *Annual Town Report*, 2012.

Richardson, the red brick and brownstone school building is elaborately detailed with a slate hipped roof, turreted dormers, and an arched entrance highlighted with brownstone relief panels.⁶ It was rehabilitated for office, Senior Center use, and for use by public groups in the 1980's. The building is located within the Pleasant Street Historic District (LHD) and the Arlington Center Historic District (NR).

The former **Parmenter School*** (1927) at 17 Irving Street was designed by architect Charles Greely Loring in the Colonial Revival style. The Town closed the school in 1983 and now leases the brick and stone building to several private educational institutions.

The former **Vittoria C. Dallin Branch Library*** (1938) at 85 Park Avenue in Arlington Heights is now leased by the Town to Arlington Community Media, Inc. (ACMi). This brick Colonial Revival style building was designed by Arlington architect William Proctor.⁷

The **Jefferson Cutter House*** at 1 Whittemore Park is located on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Mystic Street in Arlington Center. The Federal style Jefferson Cutter House was built ca. 1830 for the owner of a local woodworking mill. The building features an ornate entrance with fluted pilasters and sidelights. It was originally located further west on Massachusetts Avenue. In 1989, the Town worked with the owner to relocate the building to a plot of land in Arlington Center.⁸ Afterward, the Town restored the house and developed the land in front as a public park, leaving the railroad tracks exposed with interpretive signage. Today, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce occupies space on the second floor and the Town provides the ground floor rooms for meeting and art exhibition space. The adjoining Dallin Museum is operated by a private non-profit organization. The property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The **George Croome House** at 23 Maple Street* is a ca. 1862 Second Empire style home that previously served as the Arlington Public Schools Administration Building. The Town now leases the building to a group home. The building is located within the Pleasant Street Historic District (LHD) and the Arlington Center Historic District (NR).

OTHER GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Arlington's **U. S. Post Office** (1936) is located at 10 Court Street in Arlington Center. Constructed as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, this red brick building is designed in the Classical Revival style. The building's lobby features a Federal Art Project mural "Purchase and Use of the Soil" by artist William A. Palmer. Completed in 1938, the Art Deco style mural depicts the Squaw Sachem transferring the land of Menotomy to the English Settlers in 1635.⁹

⁶ Vision 2020, *Map of Arlington*.

⁷ Duffy, Richard, *Then & Now: Arlington*, 70.

⁸ Laskowski, Nicole, "Jefferson Cutter House hits milestone", posted December 4, 2009, Wicked Local Arlington, www.wickedlocal.com/arlington/news

⁹ www.oldschwambmill.org

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AS CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL VENUES

History and the arts are interwoven in Arlington, with many historic buildings providing venues for performance space as well as art exhibits and contemporary cultural programming. Auditoriums at Arlington's Town Hall and High School, as well as spaces within the Town's public libraries and private churches, theaters, and community halls provide rehearsal and performance space for dance, choral, and other performing arts groups. Two historic theaters continue to serve in their original capacity as community cultural spaces. In Arlington Center, the Classical Revival style **Regent Theater** (ca. 1930) continues to present live theater, music, and other performance programs each year. The **Capitol Theater***, a Classical Revival style building constructed in 1925, houses one of the best preserved early 20th century moving picture theaters in the Boston area and continues to serve as a community landmark on Massachusetts Avenue in East Arlington.¹⁰ Both theaters are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Arlington also has several other historic buildings that have been renovated and repurposed as performance and studio spaces. The Arlington Center for the Arts, a private arts organization, occupies the former **Gibbs Junior High School** in East Arlington, while the nonprofit Arlington Friends of the Drama presents live community theater in the former **St. John's Episcopal Church*** (1877), a Stick Style Church on Academy Street located within the Town Center National Register District and the Pleasant Street Local Historic District.

HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Massachusetts Avenue is Arlington's primary commercial corridor and the "spine" of the town. It is steeped in history as the site of battle during the first day of the Revolutionary War on April 19, 1775. A segment of Massachusetts Avenue, which extends through Concord, Lexington, Lincoln, and Arlington, received state designation as the Battle Road Scenic Byway in 2006 and awaits consideration as a National Scenic Byway. In Arlington, Massachusetts Avenue contains a varied collection of early nineteenth and mid-twentieth century buildings including single-story commercial blocks, multi-story mixed use commercial buildings, and Classical Revival masonry apartment buildings interspersed with earlier wood-frame houses. Arlington's three commercial districts, Arlington Heights, Arlington Center, and East Arlington, are located along Massachusetts Avenue.

CHURCHES

Arlington's religious structures represent the various architectural styles associated with ecclesiastical design over the past several centuries, including a modest eighteenth century Federal style meetinghouse, elaborately detailed Greek Revival/Italianate and Stick Style churches, a romantic stone Gothic Revival Chapel, and several large masonry Neo-Gothic Revival churches. The AHC has documented seventeen of Arlington's churches, chapels, and parish halls on historic resources inventory forms. Six of Arlington's churches are designated within a local historic district and seven are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. One building, the **Pleasant Street Congregational Church*** (now Boston Church of Christ), is further protected by a

¹⁰ Friedberg, Betsy, *Form B – Building Form: Capitol Theater Building*, December 1984.

preservation restriction because it received Massachusetts Preservation Projects Funds (MPPF) for exterior restoration work.¹¹

MUSEUMS

Arlington has two historic buildings that are open to the public as museums. Both are owned and operated by private non-profit organizations.

The **Jason Russell House and Smith Museum** at 7 Jason Street in Arlington Center is operated by the Arlington Historical Society (AHS). Built in 1740, the house was the site of fighting on the first day of the American Revolution and still bears several bullet holes from the battle. The museum houses the Society's collection of artifacts, manuscripts, and other Arlington memorabilia, and displays artifacts from the Russell family, who lived in the house until 1896. The property also includes an herb garden maintained by the Arlington Garden Club. In 1980, the AHS constructed the adjoining Smith Museum for archival and exhibit space.

The **Old Schwamb Mill** museum honors the industrial legacy of the Mill Brook and one of the early mills established on its waterway. Operated by a non-profit charitable education trust, the Old Schwamb Mill is a living history museum that presents special exhibits and a variety of programs for its members and the community. The current mill building was built in 1864 by Charles Schwamb for his picture frame factory, which specialized in round and oval frames made on unique elliptical faceplate lathes. Much of the machinery and extensive archive are still intact and the Mill continues to craft hand-made frames to the exacting standards of five generations of Schwambs.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

Arlington's historic landscapes are as varied as the town's historic buildings, representing both formal landscapes designed by landscape architects and heritage landscapes formed by generations of human interaction with the land. In addition to offering a visual respite from the town's densely-settled built environment, these landscapes also serve as community gathering spaces and areas for quiet contemplation.

DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

Arlington has two public green spaces in Arlington Center, both designed as part of building projects. The **Winfield-Robbins Memorial Garden*** (1913) was laid out as part of the Town Hall construction project in 1913. The original garden design included the Cyrus Dallin sculpture *The Menotomy Indian Hunter*. In 1939, Olmsted Associates redesigned the garden in a more natural design with a rubble rock base for the Indian sculpture, flowering trees and bushes, winding brick paths, a circular fountain and a pool, and a masonry garden wall surrounding the grounds. The Town has prepared a preservation master plan for the garden and completed repairs to the garden's sandstone and limestone wall in 2013. The Friends of Town Hall Gardens has also undertaken some restoration work to the landscape. The garden is protected by a preservation restriction and is used for both community and private events.

¹¹ Massachusetts Historical Commission, "List of Grant Recipients", <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc>

Whittemore Park is a small grass park in front of the Jefferson Cutter House that was created when the Cutter House was moved in 1989. The irregularly shaped parcel at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Mystic Street is intersected by a small section of exposed railroad tracks, which are the remains of a railway system (established in 1846) that once bisected the community. The grounds also contain several mature trees, park benches, and interpretive signage. Arlington uses the park to host art exhibits and community events throughout the year.

HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Unlike natural landscapes, heritage landscapes are created by human interaction with the land. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) operates the Historic Landscape Inventory Program, which completed Heritage Landscape Studies for communities in the Freedom's Way Heritage Area, including Arlington, in 2006. Arlington's report identified 63 heritage landscapes in the community and highlighted six for future study – the Battle Road Corridor; the Butterfield-Whittemore House at 54 Massachusetts Avenue; Great Meadow/Mill Brook Drainage System; the Mugar Property; Spy Pond and adjacent parkland; and the W. C. Taylor House at 187 Lowell Street.¹²

One of the priority landscapes identified was the **Mill Brook**, which travels from the Arlington Reservoir to the Mystic Lakes. The Mill Brook has deep historical and cultural roots dating back to the 1600s. Originally called Vine Brook and later Sucker Brook, the 2.7-mile long Mill Brook has an elevation drop of more than 140 feet, which provided water power significant enough to power small industrial ventures along its banks.¹³ During the industrial period, a series of mill ponds and dams lined the brook. After decades of reconfiguration and development, much of the brook is culverted with only limited portions of the waterway still exposed. The impression of one original mill pond is still visible as a Town-owned grassy park on Mill Lane near Lowell Street. The Town is committed to preserving the natural and historic legacy of the brook and is exploring opportunities to enhance the area as park space and a buffer zone to nearby commercial and residential neighborhoods. The Town has completed two planning studies on the Mill Brook, with the most recent report completed in 2010. The *Mill Brook Linear Park Report* provides an historical overview of the brook, land characteristics and issues, and an analysis of current conditions, challenges, and opportunities.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Arlington has documented twenty-eight structures on historic inventory forms (Appendix 1).¹⁴ These structures include bridges, a dam, several parks, landscapes, conservation lands, and an early twentieth century parkway. Many of the structures are owned by state agencies as part of regional transportation and water systems. One of Arlington's most distinctive structures is the **Arlington Reservoir Standpipe*** (1921), which occupies the crest of one of the town's highest hills.

¹² MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program: Arlington Reconnaissance Report*, 2006.

¹³ Mill Brook Linear Park Study Group, *Mill Brook Linear Park Report*, April 2010, 3.

¹⁴ See Appendix 1.

Arlington architect Frederic F. Low designed the 85-ft. tall tower based on the ruins of a Greek temple visited by the Robbins sisters, who donated funds for the structure.¹⁵ Also commonly known as the Park Avenue Water Tower, the standpipe consists of a steel tank surrounded by a granite shell with twenty-four limestone columns, a decorative cornice, and concrete dome roof. The structure was listed on the National Register in 1985.¹⁶

HISTORIC OBJECTS

Arlington's historic objects span more than two centuries (Table 6.1). Due to the town's association with nationally renowned sculptor Cyrus E. Dallin (1861-1944), who lived in Arlington for over 40 years, Arlington has a significant

collection of his artwork, including the town-owned *Menotomy Indian Hunter** in the Winfield-Robbins Memorial Garden, the *Robbins Memorial Flagstaff** at Town Hall, and *My Boys* in the Robbins Library. The Dallin Museum, located in the Cutter House, also maintains a collection of more than 60 works of art by Dallin.¹⁷ (See later discussion of Museum's collections in Section D: *Historic & Cultural Resource Planning*) Town Meeting established the museum in 1995 to collect, preserve, protect, and exhibit the works of the celebrated American sculptor. In the 1990s, Arlington completed a conservation project to preserve these objects. Other inventoried sculptures in Arlington include the late twentieth century *Uncle Sam Memorial Statue** in Arlington Center, designed by sculptor Theodore Barbarossa of Belmont.¹⁸

Table 6.1. Documented Historic Objects		
Name	Date	Location
Milestone	1790	Appleton Street
The Guardian Angel Rock	1920	Claremont Avenue
Robbins Memorial Flagstaff	1913	Mass. Avenue
Arlington Civil War Memorial	1886	Mass. Avenue
Menotomy Indian Hunter	1911	Mass. Avenue
Uncle Sam Memorial Sculpture	1976	Mass. Avenue
Source: MACRIS, accessed August 26, 2013.		

Despite widespread appreciation of public art, Arlington has documented only six of its historic markers, sculptures, and objects on inventory forms (see discussion in Section 3). Notably missing are most of Dallin's public art pieces, as well as the ca. 1912 decorative concrete *Play Fair Arch and Wall* at Spy Pond's Hornblower Field¹⁹, the historical markers along Massachusetts Avenue commemorating April 19, 1775, the granite watering trough at the Foot of the Rocks donated by the Robbins sisters in memory of their brother, and the bronze tablet in Cooke's Hollow Park commemorating the site of the first mill (1637) in Menotomy.

BURIAL GROUNDS AND CEMETERIES

The Town of Arlington maintains two public cemeteries: the Old Burying Ground on Pleasant Street in Arlington Center and Mount Pleasant Cemetery on Medford Street. Established in 1732,

¹⁵ Duffy, *Then & Now: Arlington*, 75.

¹⁶ Louis Berger & Associates, *Form F – Structure: Arlington Standpipe*, 1984, revised 1989.

¹⁷ Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum, <http://dallin.org>

¹⁸ Arlington Historical Society, *Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail*.

¹⁹ MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program: Arlington Reconnaissance Report*, 2006, 8.

the **Old Burying Ground*** is Arlington's oldest cemetery.²⁰ Located behind the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, the burial ground includes an impressive collection of early slate markers dating from ca. 1732. The Old Burying Ground is included in the Arlington Center National Register District and is protected with a preservation restriction. **The Mount Pleasant Cemetery*** (established ca. 1843) is a 62-acre cemetery highlighted by the **Cemetery Chapel*** (1930), a Gothic Revival chapel designed by the architectural firm of Gay & Proctor, a large entrance gate, Victorian-era marble monuments, and contemporary granite markers. Although still active, the cemetery is almost full and the Town is considering options for continuing interments at the facility.

The site of the **Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery*** (1846) on Gardner Street in East Arlington marks the only Black Masonic Cemetery in the United States. Today, a monument and small park mark the site where members of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge F & AM, formed in 1776, were buried. Though much of the original cemetery has been developed, a 1988 geophysical survey of the site by students of Boston University's Archaeological Department found remains of the original gate and an obelisk. In 1987, after learning about the cemetery, the Arlington Historical Society collaborated with the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Dorchester to form the Prince Hall Mystic Arlington Cemetery Association to preserve and protect the site. The group restored the site with donations from the Prince Hall Grand Lodge and CDBG funds from the Town of Arlington. In 1990, the group rededicated the cemetery and in 1998 the cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

While Arlington has not conducted a community-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey, it has completed several site-specific archeological studies. In addition to the geophysical survey for Prince Hall Cemetery, the Town commissioned archaeological excavations along the shore of Spy Pond when it renovated Spy Pond Field in the early 1990s. Resources uncovered during the project include prehistoric lithic chipping debris and structural remains from the nineteenth and early twentieth century ice industry buildings.²¹ Since Arlington is located within an area of Massachusetts that was settled centuries before the first English settlers arrived, it is realistic to imagine that other significant archaeological resources may exist within Arlington despite the town's intense development.

Any significant archaeological sites identified in Arlington will be included in the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. This confidential inventory contains sensitive information and is not a public record as required under M.G.L. c.9, s. 26A (1).

²⁰ The Burying Ground is also referred to as "Arlington Old Cemetery" and "First Parish Church Old Burying Ground" on the Historic Resource Inventory Form completed for this site.

²¹ Town of Arlington, *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, 70.

2. Historic & Cultural Resource Planning

Arlington has three Town-based organizations dedicated to preserving the community's historic resources: the Arlington Historical Commission; the Arlington Historic District Commissions; and the Arlington Preservation Fund, Inc. All three groups are involved with preservation planning, advocacy, and resource management. A fourth organization, the Arlington Historical Society, is a private non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the town's heritage, in particular the Jason Russell House and its artifacts and memorabilia. Other groups, such as the Old Schwamb Mill, the Dallin Museum, and the Arlington Public Library focus on the preservation of specific sites and historic artifact and document collections. Town boards such as the Cemetery Commission, the Redevelopment Board, the Conservation Commission, and the Arlington Tourism and Economic Development Committee (A-TED) also participate in preserving Arlington's historic character. Many of these boards have overlapping membership and have collaborated on past efforts to preserve and promote the town's history.

MUNICIPAL BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Arlington Historical Commission. Local historical commissions (LHC) are established under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40, Section 8D as the official municipal agency responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning. LHCs work in cooperation with other municipal departments, boards and commissions to ensure that the goals of historic preservation are considered in community planning and development decisions. LHCs also serve as local preservation advocates and are an important resource for information about their community's cultural resources and preservation activities.²²

The Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) is a seven-member volunteer board responsible for community-wide historic preservation planning and advocacy. The Commission is also responsible for administration of the town's demolition delay bylaw and provides guidance to other municipal departments, boards, and commissions to insure that historic preservation is considered in community planning and development decisions. The Commission's activities include historic resource surveys, National Register nominations, preservation restrictions, preservation awards, and community education and outreach. The AHC also operates a sign program, providing historic markers for inventoried properties. The AHC's website, www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org, provides a list of historically significant structures in Arlington (Historic Structures Inventory) as well as information about the Town's demolition delay bylaw and Preservation Loan Fund.

Arlington Historic District Commissions (AHDC). The AHDC is Arlington's municipal review authority responsible for regulatory design review within the Town's seven designated local historic districts adopted under M.G.L. C. 40C. In Arlington, seven separate commissions oversee changes to the Town's local historic districts. All seven commissions share the same six volunteer members, including an architect, a real estate professional, and a representative from the Arlington Historical Society, with the seventh member consisting of a resident from the

²² Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Preservation Through Bylaws and Ordinances*, Draft, 2009, 4.

respective district. The AHDC meets monthly to review the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes to properties located within the town's historic districts.

Arlington Preservation Fund. The Arlington Preservation Fund provides low interest loans for restoration work on historic properties. Originally established with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the program approved its first loan in 1984 and is now closing its 100th loan. The program is maintained as a municipal fund managed by an independent, non-profit board that oversees the distribution of funds. The nine-member board includes representatives from the Historical Commission, the Schwamb Mill, the Historical Society, and the Historic District Commissions as well as the Planning Director, an architect, lawyer, real estate professional, and a financial officer. To be eligible for funding, a property must be located within an historic district, inventoried, or otherwise deemed important by the fund's board.²³

Arlington Public Library. Arlington's Public Library is a public institution and community resource that promotes the historical, social, and cultural development of the town. The Robbins Library's Local History Room maintains a collection of historic books, scrapbooks, annual reports, atlases, photographs, postcards, slides, vertical files, other ephemera documenting Arlington's history.

LOCAL PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Arlington Historical Society. The Arlington Historical Society was founded in 1897 as a private non-profit organization dedicated to collecting and preserving historic artifacts relating to Arlington's history. In 1923, the Society acquired and restored the Jason Russell House as a historic house museum. In 1980, the Society constructed the Smith Museum to provide exhibition and meeting space as well as a climate controlled archive. The Society offers rotating exhibits and educational programming on local history, including an evening lecture series and member presentations.²⁴

Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum. The Dallin Museum manages and preserves the historic collection of Dallin's art work, including freestanding and relief sculptures, coins, medals, and paintings. The Museum also exhibits artifacts owned and used by Dallin as well as commercial items that demonstrate the far-reaching effects of the artist's work on popular culture.²⁵ The Museum also manages an archive with photographs, letters, exhibition catalogs and other documents of Cyrus Dallin. In addition to its efforts relating to Dallin's legacy, the Dallin Museum also presents lectures, exhibits, and other programming on local history and culture.

REGIONAL PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Freedom's Way Heritage Association (FWHA). Arlington is one of 37 communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire that are part of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area,

²³ Arlington Preservation Fund website, <http://www.arlingtonpreservation.org/>

²⁴ Arlington Historical Society website, <http://arlingtonhistorical.org>.

²⁵ Cyrus E. Dallin Museum website, <http://dallin.org>

designated by Congress as a nationally significant area where historical, cultural, and natural resources combine to form a cohesive, common landscape. The Freedom's Way Heritage Association manages and coordinates efforts to build civic appreciation and understanding of unique assets and stories of the area. The organization's website highlights historic resources present in each participating community, including Revolutionary sites in Arlington.

3. Local Regulations, Policies, and Initiatives

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Identifying a community's historic resources through a cultural resource survey forms the basis of historic preservation planning at the local level. During a cultural resource survey, a town documents its historic resources on individual inventory forms that include historic and architectural significance narratives, photographs, and locus maps. To date, Arlington has submitted inventory forms for more than 1,100 properties to Massachusetts Historical Commission's Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. Resources identified in Arlington's inventory date from 1695 to 1988. The Town's last survey effort was undertaken in support of expanding the Pleasant Street Historic District. Most of Arlington's inventory forms are available to view and download on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's searchable MACRIS database at mhc-macris.net. Properties listed in the inventory are subject to the town's demolition delay bylaw (see discussion below.)

NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT AND INDIVIDUAL LISTINGS

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that have been deemed significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Arlington has three multi-property National Register Districts, three National Register Districts encompassing three or fewer properties, and fifty-seven properties that are individually listed in the National Register (Appendix 2).²⁶

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Arlington has designated seven local historic districts with a combined total of 359 properties (Table 6.2). In a local historic district, building alterations subject to public view require approval from the Historic District Commissions. Over time, Arlington has expanded most of these districts due to requests from property owners wishing to have their properties included. All but the Mount Gilboa/Crescent Hill Historic District are located in or around Arlington Center and several districts abut other districts. Properties in Arlington's historic districts vary in age, style, and level of ornamentation. The HDC has adopted design guidelines as an aid to property owners.

²⁶ Massachusetts Historical Commission, *State Register of Historic Places* 2012.

Table 6.2. Local Historic Districts			
Historic District Name	Location	# Properties	Date of Designation/Most Recent Extension
Avon Place	7-29 Avon Place and 390-402 Massachusetts Avenue	12	8/20/1996
Broadway	Bounded by Broadway, Webster, and Mass Avenues	8	9/13/1991
Central Street	Bounded by Central St to east, Mass Ave to south, and bike path to north	17	6/9/1982
Jason - Gray	Jason, Gray, Irving and Ravine Streets	50	5/4/1998
Mount Gilboa - Crescent Hill	Westminster Ave, Crescent Hill Ave, Montague St, and Westmoreland Ave	104	9/13/1991
Pleasant Street	Pleasant St from Swan St to Venner Rd, Academy St, Maple St, Oak Knoll, Pelham Terr, Venner Rd and Wellington St	137	4/26/2006
Russell Street	Roughly bounded by Water, Russell, Mystic, Prescott, and Winslow Sts	31	7/31/1985
	<i>Total Number of Properties</i>	<i>359</i>	
Source: State Register of Historic Places 2012			

DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW

Arlington was one of the first communities in Massachusetts to adopt a demolition delay bylaw. Per the Town's Bylaw, Article 6 – Historically or Architecturally Significant Buildings, any building in the Historic Structures Inventory (available on the AHC website) or deemed significant by the Historical Commission is subject to review by the Commission when a property owner proposes to change or remove more than 25 percent of any one front or side elevation. The bylaw also defines demolition as a building owner's failure to maintain a watertight and secure structure. If the AHC determines during a public hearing process, that the building is preferably preserved, the bylaw imposes a 12-month delay to allow the opportunity to work with a property owner to find alternatives to demolition. The AHC has found the bylaw relatively effective when a property owner is willing to work with the Commission. For owners who are not willing to consider an alternative solution, the bylaw only results in a temporary delay before the building is demolished.

PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS

Ten Arlington properties are protected by historic preservation restrictions under M.G.L. c. 184, ss. 31-33, including public and private resources (Table 6.3). A preservation restriction is attached to the deed of a property and it is one of the strongest preservation tools available. All of Arlington's preservation restrictions run in perpetuity, with no expiration date. Most of the restrictions were put in place when the properties were restored with a Massachusetts Preservation Project Fund (MPPF) grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Table 6.3. Preservation Restrictions			
Name	Address	Date Established	Expiration Date
Arlington Old Cemetery (Old Burying Ground)	730 Massachusetts Ave	5/25/2000	None
A. P. Cutter House #2	89 Summer St	12/19/2007	None
Ephraim Cutter House	4 Water St	12/2/1994	None
Jefferson Cutter House	1 Whittemore Park	1/9/1990	None
Old Schwamb Mill	17 Mill Ln and 29 Lowell St at Mill Brook	6/23/1999	None
Pleasant Street Congregational Church	75 Pleasant St	6/1/1999	None
Robbins Memorial Town Hall	730 Mass Ave	2/10/1987	None
Winfield-Robbins Memorial Garden ²⁷	730 Mass Ave	5/25/2000	None
Charles P. Wyman House	50 Wyman St	11/12/1985	None
Source: State Register of Historic Places 2012			

EDUCATIONAL & INTERPRETIVE ACTIVITIES

Interpreting local history in visual formats that are both informative and visually appealing can engage local residents and visitors with a community's heritage. Arlington's Historical Commission and Historical Society have both sponsored educational programs to highlight the town's heritage and historical sites, including walking tours, brochures, and lectures. Arlington has only a limited number of interpretive signs in the community. These include informational markers about the events of April 19, 1775, which are located in Whittemore Park in front of the Jefferson Cutter House, at the Jason Russell House, and at the Foot of the Rocks in Arlington Heights. Historic landscape markers are also located along the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway; they were developed by the Historic Commission, and highlight local history in a neighborhood. The Town has recently created distinctive directional signage for Arlington's museums and other cultural resources. In addition, the Town has installed an interpretive sign near the Uncle Sam Memorial Statue and plans to construct a new visitor center nearby at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Mystic Street.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Arlington's historical significance extends far beyond its local boundaries to one that is both regionally and nationally important. Arlington and its neighbors played a pivotal role in the events leading to the American Revolution and several regional initiatives have been created to honor this legacy. In 2013, the Freedom's Way Heritage Area launched *Patriot's Paths*, an outreach effort to identify Revolutionary sites and compile local stories from 10 participating communities, including Arlington. The Freedom's Way website includes a list of venues in Arlington that represent the path of the Patriots in 1775. These sites include historic houses, civic buildings, burial grounds, and sites. The website also includes a list of heritage sites and priority landscapes identified in the Town's heritage landscape report completed by DCR in 2006.

²⁷ This property is listed twice in the State Register, once as the "Winfield-Robbins Memorial Garden" and once as the "Arlington Town Hall Gardens".

Designation of the **Battle Road Scenic Byway** along a portion of Massachusetts Avenue was a collaborative effort between the communities of Arlington, Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord, and the Minute Man National Historical Park, MAPC, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation. The designation seeks to conserve this historic route and to highlight its archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts officially designated the Battle Road Scenic Byway on November 6, 2006 and MAPC completed a Corridor Management Plan for the Byway in the spring of 2011.

E. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

DOCUMENTATION OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE AREAS

The first step in protecting a community's historic and cultural resource areas is identifying what resources are present. Over the past three decades, the Arlington Historical Commission has documented many of Arlington's historic resources on inventory forms. However, while these inventory forms include extensive historical and architectural narratives, the majority of these forms and their associated photographs are now more than 15 years old. Furthermore, the town still has significant areas and specific resource types that remain undocumented. Without a record of all of its historic resources, the Town cannot plan adequately to protect this heritage. For example, limited or incomplete documentation can hinder the Town's effective use of its demolition delay bylaw, which only allows review of buildings that are included in the inventory.

As in the past, the Town could engage professional preservation consultants to complete its survey initiatives, an activity that would be eligible for funding through MHC's Survey & Planning Grant program. A professional archaeologist-led survey effort to identify Native American and historic sites still present in Arlington would also be eligible for Survey & Planning funds. Other options include the use of volunteers and interns. The Historic District Commissions are considering the use of an intern to update Local Historic District property photographs, which are used during the regulatory review process.

Since Arlington has a local historic district ordinance, it is eligible to apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) designation, granted by the National Park Service through the MHC. The CLG designation is awarded based upon the strength of a community's existing and proposed programs for historic preservation. All state historic preservation offices are required to allocate ten percent of their annual Federal appropriations to CLG communities. During years of limited Federal allocation to MHC, Survey and Planning Grants are restricted to CLG communities only.

ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION

Once historic resources are identified and documented, Arlington can seek to promote and protect its historic resources. Arlington's historic resource inventory can be used to foster public appreciation of Arlington's rich heritage and to develop a public awareness campaign to encourage residents to consider historic designations. While the AHC has an extensive website, it has been many years since the Town has produced informational brochures and literature highlighting Arlington's historic resources. Providing this information in formats that are

attractive, accurate, and easily understood is important. Utilizing modern technology, such as Smartphone apps and audio recordings, can help distribute this information to a broader audience. These efforts can build a better understanding of why Arlington's historic and cultural resource areas are important and why they should be preserved. However, undertaking these efforts with volunteer memberships and limited budgets could prove challenging for Arlington's preservation organizations.

COMMUNITY-WIDE RESOURCE PROTECTION

Successful preservation of a community's historic assets requires a concerted effort by municipal leaders and boards, private organizations, and local residents to protect the resources that serve as both a tangible reminder of a community's past and a vital component of its contemporary sense of place. While Arlington residents have long valued the town's heritage, and Arlington's well-preserved collection of historic resources stand as testament to this community pride, local historical groups still struggle to increase awareness that historic resources are fragile and need to be protected. While Arlington has a general culture of stewardship for its historical resources, the town has not been as willing to mandate this protection through regulatory tools or institution of policies. While the town *verbally* supports historic preservation, it has been unable or unwilling to adopt the mechanics to *require* preservation.

Arlington has significant areas worthy of protection, but the designation process for both National Register and local historic districts requires extensive community outreach and education. The limited resources of each of the Town's historical commissions will make it extremely difficult to undertake future designation efforts.

Protection of historic and cultural resource areas should include more than just the traditional preservation-based regulatory tools, however. Arlington is a densely settled community, with much of its land now developed. This causes significant redevelopment pressure on the town's historic built environment. Identifying ways to guide this redevelopment in a manner that respects Arlington's historic character and the architectural integrity of its historic neighborhoods and commercial districts is important. Incorporating historic preservation objectives into the development review process and exploring flexible zoning regulations to encourage building preservation are several objectives for the town to consider.

RESIDENTIAL TEARDOWNS AND BUILDING ALTERATIONS

In highly desirable communities like Arlington, rising residential property values continue to put pressure on historic houses, particularly those of modest size or those sited within a large lot. This pressure is especially acute in areas of smaller, modest housing stock, which are vulnerable to demolition for larger homes and multi-family duplexes built to the maximum height and setbacks allowed under zoning. Arlington's last remaining oversized lots, many of which include historic houses and outbuildings, are also increasingly subject to subdivision and demolition. Furthermore, Arlington is witnessing some loss of historic outbuildings such as carriage houses when owners are unable to find viable uses for these secondary structures. When left vacant and not maintained, these structures slowly deteriorate leading to unsafe conditions and ultimately demolition.

For Arlington's larger and more grand homes, the town is witnessing a trend of building repair and restoration efforts by new owners interested in preservation. However, contemporary living styles are spurring significant interior remodeling and the construction of large additions. The incremental loss of historic building features such as decorative trim and original multi-pane wood windows and the construction of large additions that overwhelm the smaller, historic structure result in an incremental "fading" of Arlington's historic character.

This loss of building fabric, whether through outright demolition or incremental loss, is occurring despite Arlington's demolition delay bylaw, which is only triggered if a property is inventoried and ultimately offers only a temporary reprieve from demolition. As stated earlier, many of Arlington's historic resources remain undocumented and are therefore not subject to the demolition delay bylaw. To address the deficiencies of demolition delay legislation, some communities have adopted provisions that require building officials to notify the local historical commission when any building is proposed for demolition in order to determine historic significance. To permanently protect threatened buildings, communities have designated the properties as single building historic districts or placed preservation restrictions on the properties. Other communities have relied on zoning tools to limit instances of "mansionization".

PRESERVATION OF LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT CHARACTER

The streetscapes of Arlington's seven local historic districts provide a living history lesson of Arlington's architectural evolution and development. For more than thirty years, Arlington's local historic districts have protected the architectural integrity of the buildings found within these neighborhoods. This protection requires continued vigilance by the Historic District Commissions and ongoing communication with the Town's Building Inspector. Some physical changes such as window replacements and fence installations do not require a building permit and are often completed without approval by the respective Commission. This emphasizes the importance of retaining a resident member on each District Commission to provide an "eye on the ground" to watch over any unauthorized changes in buildings in the district. Furthermore, as the building industry continues to develop new materials and energy efficiency remains a primary concern for property owners, the AHDC must navigate the delicate balance of historic integrity and environmental sustainability, two ideas that can be mutually supportive. Continuing and expanding the AHDC's efforts to build awareness of designation requirements and promote historically-appropriate materials through property owner mailings and conversations with local realtors remains a priority.

Protecting Arlington's local historic districts requires more than just regulatory review of building alterations to be successful. Creating a sense of place for these districts to highlight their significance and promote their importance to the community can aid in efforts to create a sense of stewardship for the past. Replacement of deteriorated interpretive markers, installation of unique street signs for designated streets, and ensuring historically-appropriate infrastructure improvements to sidewalks and street lighting within the districts are also goals of the AHDC.

INTEGRATING HISTORIC PRESERVATION INTO LARGER COMMUNITY ETHOS OF CONSERVATION AND PLANNING

As discussed earlier, preserving Arlington's historic resources is more than just an effort to preserve history. These resources provide a sense of community for Arlington and its residents. Arlington is blessed with passionate groups who strive to make their community better. Bringing these advocates together, including historic, conservation, environmental, planning, cultural, economic development, and affordable housing groups, to discuss common interests for preserving community character would also allow these groups to explore opportunities to collaborate toward this effort. Even among the town's preservation groups, collaboration has been limited with each group focusing primarily on its own individual mission.

For instance, Arlington's historic resources are more than just buildings and structures, they are part of larger settings that often include significant natural, open space, and cultural resources. Successful preservation of these heritage landscapes, such as the Mill Brook and Spy Pond, requires a concerted effort by a variety of constituents working together to protect history, nature, and culture. Furthermore, historic neighborhoods are more than just historic houses; they are part of a larger streetscape network that includes the public realm of roadways, sidewalks, street trees, and lighting. The installation of historically-appropriate lighting, street signs, sidewalks, tree/planting strips, and curbing, and the burial of underground utilities, which would enhance the overall visual quality of historic neighborhoods, would require a concerted effort by Arlington's planning, building, and preservation groups.

PRESERVATION OF TOWN-OWNED HISTORIC RESOURCES

Arlington maintains a unique and exquisite collection of historic civic buildings and landscapes that serve as visual landmarks and provide valuable public spaces for the community to gather. They also provide the setting for art and cultural activities and economic development initiatives such as heritage tourism. While many of the town's historic community/civic spaces are well-maintained and utilized, others are in need of significant repair.

Each of Arlington's historic civic buildings is a unique artifact from the past with distinctive architectural ornamentation reflecting the period and culture responsible for its construction. Collectively, these buildings provide a building fabric that is truly special and their continued use for cultural programming is important for maintaining the vitality of the community. Preserving these historic buildings and their architectural details often requires careful attention and skill. The Town has been a good steward of its historic buildings, parks, and cemeteries, engaging in numerous restoration projects at these properties and designating many of its civic buildings in local historic districts. However, not all of its civic properties are protected from adverse development and alterations and the Town has not instituted procedures to require historically appropriate preservation of these resources.

Furthermore, the Town still has resources in critical need of preservation. Utilizing the expertise and guidance of the Historical Commission and Historic District Commissions, whose membership includes preservation enthusiasts and architectural professionals, can help guide future restoration efforts to ensure that renovations are architecturally and historically sensitive to these century old assets. Identifying funding sources to undertake these projects is also

important. Should the Town adopt the Community Preservation Act, some funding will become available as part of this program. While the preservation of municipal buildings is an intent of the CPA, other funding sources should be pursued and regular property maintenance through long-term maintenance plans should also be considered.

F. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What historic Town resources are important to you, and which do you feel are most at risk?
- What are the most significant threats to Arlington's historic resources?
- How can Town build support for historic preservation initiatives, including historic district designation?
- Many of Arlington's historic assets, such as Town Hall, the Robbins Memorial Gardens, or the Central School (Senior Center), serve as valuable community spaces. How can the Town continue to maintain these historic resources as community assets while remaining both historically sensitive and fiscally responsible?